



# Environmental/Conservation Education Summit

## August 11, 2010

### Springfield Conservation Nature Center

# Proceedings

Attending (full organization profiles are included in the EE/CE Directory)

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Facilitator and event coordinator, Barbara Lucks, opened the Summit by welcoming the attendees. Self-introductions of new attendees and organizations were next, followed by a presentation by Dr. Jan Weaver, from the University of Missouri, Columbia, titled, "What Research Says about Environmental Education", which is now available at:

[www.OzarksEnvironment.com](http://www.OzarksEnvironment.com)

### **--- Organization Updates --- New Educational Resources**

*Following Dr. Weaver's presentation, updates from numerous organizations were given highlighting new educational resources. A brief overview....*

**The Watershed Center at Valley Water Mill** – Mike Kromery reported that a groundbreaking was held at the new Watershed Center at Valley Water Mill on June 4, 2010, and that the foundation has been poured. The project will be a LEED Certified Green Building with Gold level as their goal. The 4,200 square foot "green" building includes meeting spaces, water quality laboratories, rainwater harvesting for flushing toilets and landscape water, a teacher resource center, office facilities, and more. The Watershed Center at Valley Water Mill expects to

open Spring, 2011. In other good news, educational resources have increased for the Watershed Center 20-25%. For more information or updates on the Watershed Center at Valley Water Mill, log onto:

[www.watershedcenter.org](http://www.watershedcenter.org)

**Springfield/Greene County Parks Botanical Center** - Katie Steinhoff reported that the opening of the new Botanical Center is scheduled for October 11-17, 2010. The center will be located at the Nathanael Greene/Close Memorial Park, 2400 S. Scenic, in Springfield and will also be the new home of the MU Extension, 4-H, and Greene County Master Gardeners. They plan to have exhibits including the history of horticulture, edible gardens, and much, much more. The building was designed to qualify for Silver Level LEED Certification. Some examples include: geo-thermal ground source heat pump systems utilized for both heating and cooling, LED parking lot light fixtures, low water use plumbing fixtures, solar orientation, the use of locally available materials, and much more. Funding for the project came from the City's 1/4 cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax, private donations and Greene County. For more information, log onto:

[www.botanicalcenter.org](http://www.botanicalcenter.org)

**The Valley Water Mill Park Equestrian Center** - Tom Moore reported that the new Equestrian Center at Valley Water Mill Park opened Friday, July 9, 2010, with a weekend full of activities. This new facility will provide a place for members of the public to ride their own horses, participate in educational activities, field trip opportunities, and more programs to be developed. The Center will have many green features, including, but not limited to, rain water harvesting through rain barrels. They have partnered with the Sheriff's Mounted Posse of Greene County to provide an Enforcement Division to cover trails, provide and promote horsemanship/fellowship through clinics, charity events, trail rides, activities and more. The Center will also become the new home for the D.A.R.E. program in this partnership. They are currently working with Greater Ozarks Audubon Society on tree identification for the trails as well.

Events expected to take place at the new facility include: Harvest Fest, 2010, Boy Scouts 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fitness Festival, 2010. For more information, log onto:

[www.parkboard.org](http://www.parkboard.org)

**The Environmental Resource Center** - Barbara Lucks reported that pending City Council approval, the City's Solid Waste Management Division will move "downstairs" into renovated space to include offices, a community meeting room

and Environmental Resource Center. The project is planned to meet Silver Level LEED Certification with completion anticipated in Spring, 2011.

### **--- Facilitated Discussions ---**

*Discussion of several current issues followed...*

**City of Springfield Sanitary Services Division** - Barbara Lucks spoke to the group about the City's Sanitary Services Division. Springfield City Council will charge a citizen's Wastewater Improvements Task Force with offering recommendations as to possible future sewer rate increases. The rate increases would be reviewed as a component of a funding plan to pay for system-wide improvements necessary under the Clean Water Act to address the issue of sewer overflows now under consideration by regulatory agencies Missouri Department of Natural Resources and US Environmental Protection Agency. Recommendations will come from the Task Force after deliberations which include the review of an upcoming rate study - the first such study since 1990. The Task Force is expected to present its recommendations in spring, 2011. For more information on the City of Springfield's Sanitary Services Division, log onto:

[www.springfieldmo.gov/sanitary](http://www.springfieldmo.gov/sanitary)

**P.A.H. (Poly Aromatic Hydrocarbon) Classification Chemicals** - Mike Kromery spoke to the group about P.A.H. Classification Chemicals, which is found in coal tar parking lot sealers. Due to the environmental hazards, the City of Springfield Public Works Department is no longer using these types of chemicals and Springfield City Council is currently debating on proposing a ban city-wide. Information and education as well as a very informative presentation from the USGS regarding this issue can be found on the city's website at:

[www.springfieldmo.gov/stormwater](http://www.springfieldmo.gov/stormwater). Other alternatives to using coal tar sealants would be to use asphalt sealants instead. For more information, log onto:

[www.springfieldmo.gov/stormwater](http://www.springfieldmo.gov/stormwater)

**Air Quality** - Doug Neidigh spoke to the group about air quality issues in our area. He informed the group that ground level ozone limits are expected to be available by the end of October, 2010 and at that time they should hear more about local attainment status. Mr. Neidigh also took the opportunity to point out the need for more education regarding air quality/air quality issues. Local air quality monitoring sites include: Hillcrest High School and Fellows Lake. For more information, log onto:

[www.ozarkscleanairalliance.org](http://www.ozarkscleanairalliance.org)

**City of Springfield Long Range Planning Process** – Barbara Lucks and Mike Kromery spoke to the group about the City's Long Range Planning Process. The City of Springfield is engaged in a strategic plan development project that included the Natural Environment as one of the topics to be addressed. Mike Kromery and Matt O'Reilly served as co-chairs of the Natural Environment Focus Group, one of 12 focus groups. The group presented their recommendations including a strong emphasis on Environmental and Conservation Education. Sustainability is one of the themes to be included in all groups' plans. Citizen involvement included the City Managers Listening Tour in late, 2009. For updates and information on the Strategic Plan, log onto:

[www.springfieldmo.gov/strategicplan](http://www.springfieldmo.gov/strategicplan)

### **--- Questions ---**

*Attendees were asked to submit discussion questions in advance of the summit.*

#### **How do you handle background checks?**

- Done as a safety precaution.
- Safenet and google used in some businesses/organizations
- References should be used
- Child abuse website should be checked
- School volunteers need background checks
- Some applications/businesses use judgment calls and may not discriminate
- Some businesses/organizations may not do checks if working less than 15 hours
- Some businesses/organizations may not require checks on youth volunteers under the age of 18—letter of reference may be required instead

#### **How do you approach discussion topics about which members of your audience may have opinions without alienating them?**

- Factual/Un-bias
- As an educator—teach facts, not opinions
- Do not present your opinion/good or bad
- Let children/students learn from their own experience and gain their own opinion
- Present all facts—good or bad—present both sides of issue
- Walk the children/students through the physics
- Adapt rather than evolve

#### **Since the economic crunch, have you experienced changes, such as fewer field-trips, smaller budgets, etc? If so, how have you adapted?**

- Seeing people needing 2<sup>nd</sup> career—age ratio change in colleges

- Springfield Public Schools budget cuts—may not have as much ability for outside educational activities as with years past
- Possibility of no decrease in SPS 4<sup>th</sup> grade \*Nature Unleashed\* program, may be reimbursed by the State
- SPS may have lack of buses—average bus cost \$80/2 hrs—9-1 slot for buses due to school hours
- Springfield/Greene County Parks Camp attendance in programs with fees are down 30-60%